

Making Magic Real



Richard Osterlind

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O s t e r l i n d
MYSTERIES

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First Print Edition
March 2002

First E-Book Edition
July 2003
E-Book Layout & Design - Jim Sisti

For Lisa
Not just my new wife, but my new life.

FOREWORD

I love the art of magic. More than just a profession, it is a way of life with me. It gives me joy, gets me through hard times and shows me the potential of the human mind. Doing magic is not doing the impossible, but finding out the extent of what is possible. It is breaking down barriers that hold others back and finding wonderful, new worlds around every corner.

Magic can make you young and healthy. It can give you confidence when others give up. It can give you a marvelous new outlook on life. It can solve problems when there appears to be no solution. It can show you the truth of one of my favorite sayings, "There are always options!"

I

THE MAGIC STATE OF MIND

One can only observe the world from within oneself and hope those feelings, which make up one's entire being, are universal. I can only have something to say to you if my ideas of happiness, sorrow, love, hate, joy, disappointment and other emotions mean basically the same to you as to me. This is vital to my theory of the "Magic State of Mind."

I constantly try to relive my feelings as a young boy when I first discovered magic. What a world that was! I try to remember my joy upon learning how a trick worked and how I felt about being able to perform it. I try to remember my excitement upon getting a new book or prop and the anticipation of the powers it would give me. I try to remember what I expected life to be like once I became an accomplished miracle maker.

How absurd is it to discover it takes the maturity of life to teach us the magic of innocence and yet destroys it at the same time! It is our job as magicians to reclaim it.

God bless you if you still harbor even some of those same magic feelings. God bless you if you still feel not just the excitement, but the *wonder* you had when you first learned magic. At the very least, God bless you for wanting to feel that way again.

II

IF YOU BELIEVE IN YOUR MAGIC, SO WILL OTHERS

I am not referring to being confident your secret is so well hidden it will defy detection or your sleight of hand is so flawless that no one will catch on to the moves. I am not referring to the box you paid so much for and is so well made you can pass it out for inspection. I am referring to really believing you are doing magic! That does not mean just putting the tricky part out of your head, but putting the effect created and the supposed magical reason for its happening *into your head*.. If you can truly believe what you are pretending to do is really happening, then your audience will believe it, too.

As a child, I had a wonderful plastic set of Chinese Rice Bowls. I was certainly smart enough to know the reason the rice doubled and changed to water was because of the plastic gimmick, but that didn't stop me from thinking those golden bowls were really magic. Likewise, my red magic vase hung suspended from the rope because of magic, not the little cork ball inside. It had something to do with those painted Chinese characters on the side, not the instructions that came with it in the box from Adams. My magic wand rose in my hand because I willed it and not because of the two buttons connected inside it with black elastic cord.

How could I know the secret and still believe in magic? Back then, it was no problem. It was as easy as believing there were real bad guys I was shooting with my six-gun. It was as easy as how I could fly when I had my Superman cape on. Who ever said that you couldn't believe two things at once? Hypnotism can take us back into a child-like innocence. In his wonderful book, *The Hypnotic World of Paul McKenna*, Paul relates a story of a hypnotized man being told to walk across an "empty" room. A chair was placed in front of him. The man got up and walked around the chair. When asked why he did that,

the man said, "To avoid hitting the chair." When he was asked why he saw the chair when the room was empty, he replied, "What chair?" You don't have to be hypnotized to think that way. If you take the right approach it is easy to train your mind to be in the "Magic State."

Ideomotor reflex is the mental phenomenon that results in unconscious movements of your body by holding a strong thought in your mind. These movements happen automatically and appear to be out of your physical control. They will cause a pendulum held in your hand to swing back and forth for "Yes" or in circles for "No" to answer questions you ask it. It will cause the pointer on a Ouija Board to slide around and appear to be guided by spirits. It can even move tables in a séance if the participants are in the right frame of mind. Some magical effects can be greatly enhanced if you purposely apply ideomotor reflex to them. The Haunted Key is a perfect example.

This trick has been around for years. A skeleton key is placed in your palm. You make passes over it with the other hand and the key suddenly turns over. The modus operandi is simply that a slight change in balance will make the key turn. Many magicians believe the proper method to achieve this is to slightly tilt their hand forward, causing the key to revolve. This is totally wrong. I have seen the effect ruined by doing it that way. The method is too obvious and it becomes nothing more than a throwaway or gag effect.

The real secret is to place the key on the palm, balanced just at the point where it is ready to turn. Then, if you slightly contract the muscles of your palm, you can cause the key to slowly turn over. The hand doesn't move and you can hide the muscle movements by keeping that part of your hand turned away from the spectators. This is the recommended method and it works well. We can, however, take the trick one step further.

Instead of consciously using the muscles in your hand to make the key move, just "think" for it to move. That's right, just think! If you think hard enough, your ideomotor reflex will take over and the key will start to turn! At first you may need to help it by deliberately moving those muscles, but after awhile, the key will just move according to your willpower. Once you get the knack of it, you can cause the key to stop midway, start up again or even reverse directions. Using the other hand over the top of the key adds to the effect. It will look so

eerie that people will be convinced you are either really using your mind or else relying on magnets or threads. Even those who know the old method will find themselves wondering.

Let me clearly restate the goal of this exercise. The objective is not to put the thought that you are using your muscles to move the key *out* of your mind. The objective is to put the thought that you are using your willpower to move the key *into* your mind!

When you can do that, two things will happen. First, the muscle movements in your hand will become so slight they will be virtually invisible even to the closest observer. You won't have to worry about angles. Second, if you can become so convinced that you are really using just your mind to move to move the key, the idea of trickery will simply cease to exist! You will really be doing it by magic! When you get that far, you are on the threshold of miracles.

If you are laughing at this now, you may as well put this book away and go no further. You are missing the point altogether. If you think it is silly to pretend you are doing real magic, you must think it silly for an actor to cry real tears because he is living the part. You must think it silly that an author can become depressed for weeks by the sadness his pen created in his latest novel. You must think it silly that an artist feels that part of his very soul is in his painting.

If you can, however, get into this "Magic State of Mind," you are about to enter into a world that you hadn't felt since childhood. It is a feeling that probably first pulled you into the art. It is a world where real magic happens! Just like Harry Potter discovering he is a wizard, you will discover the same. If you are truly into the "Magic State of Mind," you will even become nonplussed or shocked if someone should suggest it is just a trick. Most of the time, however, that will not even happen. Trust me. Your audience will sit back and experience the wonder with you. It is not a question of you suspending reality for the audience; it is a question of you creating a "new reality."

Remember what I said in the beginning of this chapter? If your feelings and emotions are the same as mine, then when I create real magic for myself, I create it for you, too! Likewise, if you create real magic for yourself, it will be real for your audience.

There are other effects where you can utilize the same principle of using ideo-motor reflex to create this "Magic State." In *The Close-*

Magic of Frank Garcia - Volume One, there is an effect called “Uncanny.” In this effect, an indifferent card flips over by its own volition and turns into the selected card. Instead of having the card flip over quickly as a simple revelation, practice having it turn over slowly and mysteriously, apparently using the power of your mind. If you do it right, the effect looks incredible. This quickie becomes a feature effect that people will talk about long after you leave.

One other effect to consider, although there are countless others, is the new trick going around where a borrowed finger ring placed on a rubber band slides across it uphill. This is another of those effects that works on a principle that can be controlled with your mind. If you just “think” it to happen and present it in the “Magic State” you will have a miracle.

Moving an object with your mind is one of the strongest magical feats you can perform. If you can do it without elaborate props, threads, magnets or any other gimmick at any time, any place and completely surrounded, you have something to treasure. Here you have three and the potential to find many more.

III

THE MENTAL STATE OF MIND

I have been a mentalist for most of my professional career. There is a reason for this and a lesson to be learned. I love all forms of magic and have performed most of them. During the 70's, I even built and performed illusions when I played with a band called Merlin. There are times when I dearly miss doing billiard ball and card manipulations. I love the Linking Rings and the Cups and Balls. Contrary to what many mentalists have written, I love elaborately decorated boxes and shiny apparatus. I think they exude mystery.

When I was performing in China, I had the opportunity to visit many ancient landmarks such as the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace and most were filled with items that resembled magic props! The reason this look is not used much in mentalism is simply because it doesn't fit. Items that appear as if they came from a stationary store are more appropriate. In like manner, I discovered years ago that I do not have the flamboyancy of a David Copperfield to pull off that type of act. I do not have the natural comic ability of a Johnny Thompson to be a great comedy magician. My personality is more appropriate for mental magic and hypnotism. We should all strive to take advantage of our natural, God-given abilities.

In my early days, I was mostly concerned with pulling off the effects and fooling everyone. My worse nightmare was being found out and discredited. As the years went on, I found myself less concerned with these matters and more concerned with doing an entertaining show. Also, like so many other mentalists, I started half-believing I could really read minds. I found myself standing on stage with the attitude I could just look at someone and peer into his or her innermost thoughts. This demeanor comes from the absolute necessity of having to "play the part" to be successful. I always use a disclaimer stating I do not possess supernatural powers, but then perform as if I

do! Some magicians criticize mentalists for working this strong, but I think that attitude is unfair. Top magicians do the same thing. They may call their effects illusions, but then go on to state there are no camera tricks, no wires, no mirrors, no trap doors, in short, nothing that is tricked - even though there is! It's back to the previous chapter about *believing two things at once*! That principle will be used throughout this book and is invaluable.

In the first chapter, you learned how to apply the "Magic State of Mind" to effects using ideo-motor reflex. I have no intention of trying to make you a mentalist, but I want you to understand the "Mental State of Mind" so we can move on. It is a technique I developed years ago and try to apply whenever possible. It is designed to not only give the perfect illusion of mindreading, but to also to make you feel as if you are doing exactly what you are claiming. In so doing, you will enter into the "Magic State" when performing mental effects. This technique can be applied to most examples of pseudo-telepathy and we will use it here with a simple card effect.

To begin, you must have a stacked deck. Any stack that allows you to know the rotation of the cards so you can determine a selected card by glimpsing the previous card in the stack (such as the 8 Kings or Si Stebbins) can be used. False shuffle the deck and hand the cards to a spectator. Have the person cut the cards once or twice to make sure he knows how to do this. It is important he only gives the deck complete cuts. Now turn your back on the spectator and have him cut the deck once or twice more. Have him place either the top or bottom card into one of his pockets without looking at it. As you take back the deck, you casually glance at the bottom of the deck and spot the face card. Now here is the important part. As soon as you spot the card – *forget it!* That's right, forget it.

Have the spectator walk to the other side of the room while you place the deck aside and pick up a pad and magic marker. When it is obvious you cannot possibly see his card or be able to read a marked card from that far away, have the spectator remove it and stare at its face. If you like, you can have him shield the back of the card for extra effect. Only now when he is looking at the card do you start to concentrate and remember the card you spotted earlier. After you recall the card, do the math to determine his card and then draw a picture

of the card on the pad to the best of your ability. Have him show everyone his card and you turn the pad around to end.

First, this is a very strong presentation for a simple card effect. The idea of drawing a *picture* of the card is Annemann's and it is a stroke of genius. It gives ten times the impact of simply naming the card. What I really want to emphasize, however, is the mental state of mind you put yourself in when you do it this way.

Most magicians would look at the bottom card, compute the chosen card right away and then do the effect. This is wrong for two reasons. First, you have to mentally calculate the card at a time when you shouldn't be concerned as to what it is. Although this might be a simple enough mental process, it still may show. All you should be concerned about at this point is setting up the "test conditions" of the effect. Second, if you already know the card they have, you have to "act" when you are supposedly reading his mind. Even though you may be a great actor, it will never look as convincing as if you really have to dig into your brain to figure out what it is.

By waiting until the moment you are supposedly reading his mind, *you don't have to act at all*. The process of remembering and computing the card looks identical to the process of telepathically receiving the thought. More importantly, it is just a small step in the "believing two things at once" mental process to convince yourself you are really reading his mind. You tell him to look at the card and concentrate; you stare at him and try to see into his mind. Part of your own mind will compute the card for you while another part is trying to read his.

The name of his card will sort of drift into your consciousness and it will feel to you as if you received his thought. The end result will be a demonstration of telepathy that looks totally authentic.

Again, for those of you who may be thinking "nonsense," let me talk about method acting. There are a number of actors who, when making a movie, will not respond to their real name, but only the name of their character. They get so caught up in the role that it becomes their reality. If a good actor can stay in that frame of mind for weeks, we can certainly sustain it for the duration of our performance.

There are many mental effects where you can use this technique. Let me give you one more. John Cornelius has a wonderful effect called "Thought Transmitter." It is a leatherette case that a spectator

can write on with a marker and close to conceal the writing. A secret gimmick allows you to spot the word or design in a split second and then have it invisible again. Using my “Mental State of Mind,” you would have the spectator write a name on the case and close it. Taking it back, you would get the glimpse and then instantly forget it! After a bit of by-play, you stare at the spectator, read his mind (remember), and write down the name.

You may be wondering, “What if I really forget the information?” If you do – *wonderful!* Then you will *really* have to concentrate and sweat a little! Isn’t that perfect? Rest assured the information *will* eventually come back to you. You also know you can get it again if you really have to. But, if you do have to strain and worry about getting it, you will look just like you would if you were really doing it. More importantly, your mental condition will be exactly the same as if you were truly presenting a test of telepathy.

I have to address one more issue here that was recently brought to my attention by a very good friend in magic. There are a lot of magicians who have a problem separating *acting* from *lying*! There are a lot of magicians who get very uncomfortable when they affect the audience so strongly that they achieve “real” amazement. They somehow feel as if they have gone “too far” with their abilities. That attitude only destroys the very essence of magic. I see the trend manifested in a number of ways.

First, there’s the need of some magicians to constantly use comedy as if to minimize the amazement factor of their magic. Could it be they feel guilty that such simple secrets can cause such astonishment? I can almost hear their thoughts saying, “Gosh, look! It’s only a trick!”

Secondly, there’s the need of some magicians to do only difficult sleight-of-hand. I believe this group needs to satisfy their ego by knowing their magic requires “skill.” That attitude is about as pointless as a musician that thinks good music means playing a lot of difficult notes.

Thirdly, there’s the need of a large number of magicians to put down any performer who really affects his audience. They call David Copperfield “corny” for trying to achieve true audience emotion. They put down David Blaine for using standard magic in such a way as to completely dazzle ordinary people on the street. In Japan, local magicians tried to destroy the career of Mr. Maric because he had such a

profound effect on his audiences.

Artists do not create meaningless paintings so you won't feel any real emotion! Writers do not do their best to stop you from getting caught up in the reality of their fiction! Actors do not stop in the middle of a line to remind you they are only playing a part!

Contrary to what *anyone* has written, magic is *not* the art of *deception*! It is an art of *creation*, just like all the rest! It is an art that creates a *magic world*! It creates a reality where the impossible can happen and we can all experience...*wonder* !

IV

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF REAL MAGIC

As we move along developing the “Magic State,” I want to point out there is plenty of “real magic” out there that automatically puts you in the “Magic State.” There is no worry about covering up a “trick” because there is no trick! You don’t have to worry about believing in what you are doing, because you really are doing what you say. Many magicians never seem to use or understand the value of this material.

The first effect that comes to mind is the “Amazing Memory Test” as outlined in Step 3 of Corinda’s *Thirteen Steps To Mentalism*. (You can also find this in a slew of other books.) This demonstration of mnemonics is a killer effect that can be an entertaining routine lasting for more than fifteen minutes. I have used this as an opener for corporate shows with great results. Even with all the memory courses available, very few people bother studying them or know how to use them.

Another great effect is Harry Lorayne’s Instant Magic Square. I saw Harry perform this *exactly* the way he describes it in his *The Magic Book* and knock out a hall full of magicians!

If you bother to read and learn the effects in John Fisher’s book, *Body Magic*, you will have an enormous amount of material at your disposal for any occasion. Nowhere will you need any props, hidden gimmicks nor have to execute any sleights.

One of my most favorite magic books is Martin Gardner’s *Encyclopedia of Impromptu Magic*. This wonderful tome is just filled with magic you can do with everyday articles. Although some of the magic does require preparation or sleight of hand, there is a ton of material that just relies on you “knowing how.”

Likewise, *Miracle Math* by Harry Lorayne can give you great material and *Games You Can’t Lose* by Harry Anderson has wonderful stuff a magician can use.

I can go on and on with titles of books that fall into this category. My goal is to make you feel like a real magician. Magicians are supposed to “know” things - cool things! Performing magic whose secret lies in “what you know” as opposed to “what you do” can be a tremendous asset in acquiring the “Magic State.” You don’t have to think past secrets and misdirection. The “magic” is already real, so take advantage of it!

V

EXPANDING THE MAGIC STATE OF MIND

Learning the material in the “Magic State of Mind” and the “Mental State of Mind” is both very simple and very difficult at the same time. Certainly there are no elaborate sleights or artifices to contend with, but learning to really believe in your magic may be harder than you imagined. You cannot pretend you believe; you must *really* believe! For some, that is quite difficult.

The process reminds me of looking at a “Magic Eye” picture. I love those pictures! When you look at one of them, you first see an overall design or pattern. If you stare at the picture the right way, an incredible 3-D image suddenly appears. It feels as though the paper it is printed on has become a window allowing you to look deep, down into it. You are truly transported into a different dimension. Some people can see the image almost immediately; others must work at it for some time. Some people cannot readjust their vision at all and can never experience the sensation. Seeing your magic become real for the first time is as startling as seeing that 3-D image suddenly jump out of the paper at you. It is wonderful.

The real significance of achieving the “Magic State of Mind” will become far more dramatic as we move along in its study. Getting past the hurdle of gaining the “Magic State” will open doors to places you never imagined existed. Not only will you feel like a real magician to yourself and your audience, but also you will approach all magic in a different way. The chore of learning new sleights and misdirection will take on a new dimension! The elusiveness of trying to make your magic look natural will simply vanish.

Magicians have been studying from each other with both good and bad results for centuries. Outside of creating totally new magic, this is the only way we can learn our craft. Whether we are studying a book that only teaches basic concepts, or one that teaches the most

sophisticated secrets of an accomplished magician, we have to apply those ideas to ourselves. Since we are all unique, this can be a daunting task. What is very natural to one magician may be totally artificial to another. One of my goals is to try to make that process easier.

In my professional performances, I often talk about how the human mind is the most advanced computer in the world. Yes, it makes the audience feel good, but it is also true! The information our brains process every second of the day is staggering. We are unaware of most of it. The human mind is more complex than anything man can make. This is why with all the modern advancements in technology, modern science can only hope to “clone” life and not “create” it.

I remember when I first obtained the first volume of the *Tarbell Course in Magic*, I was working for the New Haven Meals on Wheels program. I spent six months walking around all day with a half-dollar classic palmed while I delivered food to the elderly. That experience taught me a lot about looking natural. Most of the time, I wasn’t even aware I had the coin. The amazing part was I never flashed the coin!

This is where believing two things at once comes into play. Even though I wasn’t aware of the coin in my hand, a part of my mind knew no one else was supposed to see it. That part of my mind knew the angles automatically and adjusted for the line of sight of the people around me. I even found myself closing my hand more when I was in a crowd. It happened automatically without any conscious effort on my part! That is what the mind can do. Your brain can control your breathing, your heartbeat and all the rest of your body’s actions without your awareness. It can also be programmed to control magical actions as well.

We will now expand the “Magic State of Mind” to a more advanced state. For our example, we will use the simple vanish of a half-dollar. The method will be nothing more than a false transfer. Most magic books (including my own beloved *Tarbell*) teach the following sequence. First, really transfer the coin from one hand to the other and study the movements. Second, attempt to duplicate those actions as closely as possible when doing the false transfer. Third, hold the one hand as if it really had the coin and the other as if it were really empty. Finally, show the coin has vanished by opening the hand.

This is all sound advice. The problem comes when you step in

front of a mirror and begin to work on these actions. In addition to trying to make the movements of both hands look natural, you have to be concerned with angles of visibility and the timing and the acting necessary to pull it off. If you separate each of the separate actions and analyze them, there are many vital points to be concerned with. Even this most simple magic maneuver can become a forbidding task.

(If you think I am exaggerating the difficulty of the move, let me ask you if you have ever tried to teach this simple vanish to a novice? Did you find yourself frustrated because he or she couldn't coordinate their movements or hold their hands naturally? Even some advanced performers telegraph this most basic sleight.)

Let's try to make this whole process easier. We will use a basic finger-palm false transfer. The coin is held at the base of the right-hand fingers and is supposedly dropped into the left hand. In reality, the coin remains in the right hand and the left hand pretends to accept it and close. You should study these moves in front of a mirror in the traditional way. You have to make the transfer in the correct manner. As mentioned before, there are countless books on magic to teach you this and numerous other moves. That is one thing we have no shortage of.

Now is when the "Magic State of Mind" comes into play. You must *believe* the coin is really dropped in the left hand! Really, really, really believe! You must feel it. Feel the coldness. Feel the hardness. Feel the shape and the weight. It has to be so real for you that there is absolutely no doubt in your mind the coin is in your hand! You have to be so sure the coin is there that for anyone to suggest otherwise would be as ridiculous as him or her suggesting that the sky is not blue.

If you can really feel the coin in your hand, you will automatically hold it the right way. You will feel your fingers sliding over the smooth surface of the coin. You will feel your fingers squeezing it to avoid dropping it. Your hand won't be too flat or too open; it will be just right. You won't have to copy some illustration in a book or try to look like a performer on video tape. You will hold the coin just like you have always held objects your entire life. Nothing can look as natural for you as that.

In addition, you won't have to worry about your other hand (with the palmed coin). Your fingers will curl as perfectly as when they are

really empty and your hand and arm will fall to your side and swing normally. Your hand will automatically turn to hide the coin from the line-of-sight angle of your audience without any conscious effort on your part. Your total concentration will be on the coin in your other hand. It will all just happen!

You have to decide now just how the coin will vanish. This is the fun part! How would you do it if you really could? What would the coin do? You can do whatever magic you want to! You can imagine it dissolving into little silvery pieces that flutter to the floor. Or you might prefer imagining the coin dissolving into a puff of smoke. See the smoke begin to slip through your fingers and as you open your hand, see the smoke drifting upwards into nothingness! Perhaps you want it to shrink down smaller and smaller until it is gone. Whatever way you decide, you must see and feel it happening! If you have been able to feel the coin in your hand the way I suggested, this should be no problem. It will be a continuation of the reality you have created for yourself. It will look and feel to you about as magical as is humanly possible. You will really be *magic*!

Don't be surprised if your audience sees the coin vanishing the same way! I don't want to lecture about the possibility of telepathy, but when your belief system is really strong it can transfer itself to your audience to a point that seems uncanny. Perhaps it is the mannerisms and movements that telegraph what they perceive. Either way, if they see the magic, the goal is accomplished.

VI

KNOWING WHAT THE MAGIC IS

In order to apply the “Magic State of Mind” to your magic, you have to know what the effect is you are performing. This may seem elementary on the first reading, but it is far from that. Let’s take a simple card effect as an example. A spectator takes a card, looks at it and returns it to the deck. You shuffle the pack and show a card. It is not the right one. You place it aside and a moment later, when you turn it over, it is the selected card. That’s a simple straightforward effect that, at first thought, doesn’t seem to need further explanation. There are, however, a number of magical rationalizations as to how this could have taken place.

The first, and simplest, is the indifferent card either magically changed into the selected card or changed places with it. The second explanation is the performer is a great card handler and somehow was able to change the card through his card sharking capabilities. The third and last is that the spectator’s perception was somehow altered so that he “thought” he saw another card when, in fact, it was his card all along. These are all possible magical solutions to the effect achieved. With some thought, you might be able to think of more.

You can, of course, just do the trick and let the spectators wonder. I certainly wouldn’t criticize you for doing so, but I do think the effect can be enhanced if you do decide what effect you are going for. The decision will have to be made on your style of working and how you present the trick.

If you elect to present the trick as straight magic, you might consider passing your hands over the card or snapping your fingers to make it change. Think about it. If you really were doing it by real magic, wouldn’t you need to do something? Perhaps wave a wand, say a spell or whatever. Think about the Harry Potter books. What did they do in those books to make magic? I am not suggesting that you

act hokey or say silly spells, but I do think it does deserve some thought. More importantly for us, if we are trying to get into the “Magic State,” we have to know what we are believing in.

The second option would be great if you were doing poker demonstrations and fancy flourishes in order to show your expertise with cards. In that case, after the “indifferent” card is placed on the table, you might consider doing a couple of fancy cuts with the deck near the card or perhaps pick up the card and drop it back down before showing it to be the selected card. This would lead the audience to think that through your incredible ability, you somehow switched the card even though they were watching so carefully. I like to use this type of approach when doing “The Lorayne Poker Deal” from *Close-up Card Magic*. Again, using the “Magic State,” I envision my hands moving at lightning and invisible speed while dealing to give myself the Royal Flush.

The third option, although it may seem a bit far-fetched, is one I actually use when performing the “Uncanny” effect I mentioned earlier. The eerie effect of the card turning over just lends itself to the idea that it was the chosen one all along and that perhaps the spectator was sort of “hypnotized” into believing it was different. It is an easy matter to apply the “Magic State” to this effect. As the card turns over, I tell the spectator that in addition to using my mind to move the card, I also previously used my thoughts to make him see the wrong card. As a performing hypnotist, it is an easy matter for me to believe this scenario in my mind since I can really do it!

Even if you don’t come right out and make a claim as to what you are doing, you should be “thinking” of what you are supposed to be doing. It’s amazing how often the audience will pick up on what is going on in your head. If you are thinking of the modus operandi, you may be in for an unpleasant surprise. If, on the other hand, you are thinking of the magical effect, you will be on safe ground.

I am trying to present these ideas on a very elementary level to make my point as clear as possible. It is important to think through the magic you are doing. A good way to approach the question of effect is to ask yourself what would the audience believe happened if real magic were possible? Then just go ahead and “make” that magic!

VII

A FINAL WORD

I have often stated that I get my magical inspiration from many different sources. Certainly the recent *Harry Potter* books have been enlightening in reminding me how one would feel to really study magic. The chapter with him going to Diagon Alley to buy the right wand, cauldron, etc. reminded me so much of walking into the local magic shop when I was a kid! I can think back to my childhood and remember how affected I was to see the Walt Disney cartoon, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. What a great job the animators did in showing what real magic would look like. *The Lord of the Rings* has become a popular movie just recently, but I discovered Tolkien's wonderful trilogy over thirty years ago. If you want to know how sleight-of-hand magic should really look, then find the chapter where Tom Bombadil takes Frodo's magic ring and makes it disappear!

The recent 2002 Olympics games were once again a source for motivation. How can not watching the top athletes in the world do the incredible things they do not inspire all forms of human endeavor?

I like to often compare the study of magic to studying an instrument. For awhile, I was a music education major in college. A music teacher must be required to be able to play just about every major band instrument with some degree of proficiency. I can tell you from personal experience, the effort necessary to master a good Pass or Second Deal in no way surpasses even rudimentary skills in playing most instruments. In addition, the expertise it is necessary to attain with an instrument before playing in public is far greater than it is with magic. In short, there should be no such thing as giving up on some magic sleight or routine because it is "too hard."

Two of my favorite effects are the Cups and Balls and the Linking Rings. Like so many others, I prefer the Dai Vernon treatments of both of these classics. Dai evolved these two routines from the ideas of

some of the greatest minds in magic. They both represent the highest standards in our art. To me, practicing them is like practicing the “scales” of magic. Taking the basic segments of each and applying the “Magic State” to every move is the best way I have found to apply these principles in a practical way. When you are through, you will have two of the finest routines in magic.

In conclusion, I hope I have inspired you to at least think about approaching your magic in the “Magic State.” I have long ago learned that almost anything I am so sure about may be totally wrong for someone else. I hope, however, in this case, I am not.

